By Mrs Hannah More K. 3. 4418 [illegible] 33.

CHEAP REPOSITORY.

TAWNY RACHEL,

OR,

The FORTUNE TELLER;

With ſome Account of Dreams, Omens and Conjurers.

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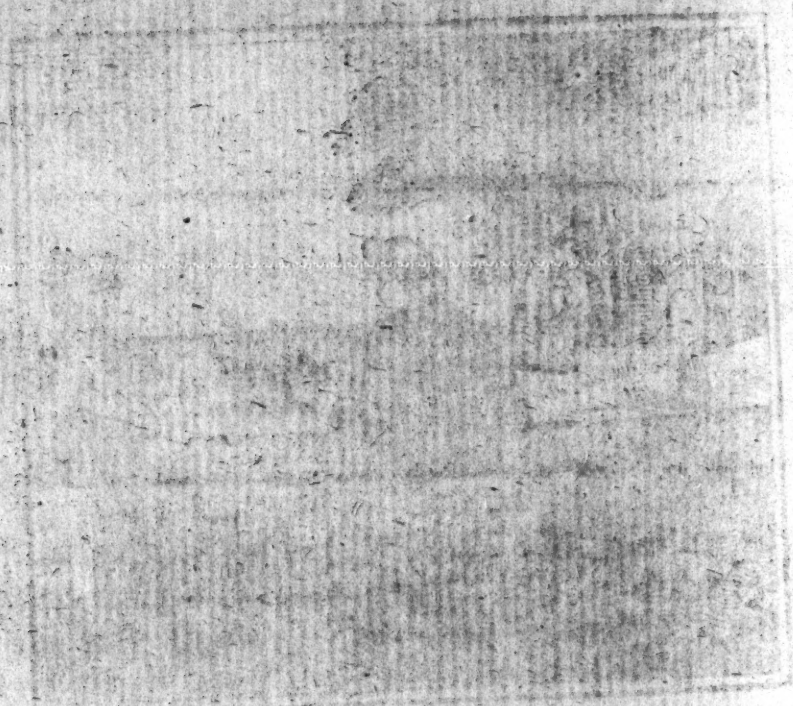

TAWNY RACHEL, &c.

TAWNY Rachel was the wife of poaching Giles. There ſeemed to be a conſpiracy in Giles's whole family to maintain themſelves by tricks and pilfering. Regular labour and honeſt induſtry did not ſuit their idle habits. They had a ſort of genius at finding out every unlawful means to ſupport a vagabond life. Rachel travelled the country with a baſket on her arm. She pretended to get her bread by ſelling laces, cabbage nets, ballads and hiſtory books, and to buy old rags and rabbit ſkins. Many honeſt people trade in theſe things, and I am ſure I don't mean to ſay a word againſt honeſt people, let them trade in what they will. But Rachel only made this traffic a pretence for getting admittance into farmers' kitchens, in order to tell fortunes. She was continually practiſing on the credulity of ſilly girls; and took advantage of their ignorance to cheat and deceive them. Many an innocent ſervant has ſhe cauſed to be ſuſpected of a robbery, while ſhe herſelf, perhaps, was in league with the

thief. Many a harmleſs maid has ſhe brought to ruin by firſt contriving plots and events, and then pretending to foretell them. She had not, to be ſure, the power of foretelling things, becauſe ſhe had no power of ſeeing into futurity; but ſhe had the art ſometimes to bring them about according as ſhe had foretold them. So ſhe got that credit for her wiſdom which really belonged to her wickedneſs.

Rachel was alſo a famous interpreter of dreams, and could diſtinguiſh exactly between the fate of any two perſons who happened to have a mole on the right or the left cheek. She had a cunning way of getting herſelf off when any of her prophecies failed. When ſhe explained a dream according to the natural appearance of things, and it did not come to paſs; then ſhe would get out of that ſcrape by ſaying, that "this ſort of dreams went by contraries." Now of two very oppoſite things the chance always is that one of them may turn out to be true; ſo in either caſe ſhe kept up the cheat.

Rachel in one of her rambles ſtopped at the houſe of Farmer Jenkins. She contrived to call when ſhe knew the maſter of the houſe was from home, which indeed was her uſual way. She knocked at the door; the maids being out hay-making, Mrs. Jenkins went to open it herſelf. Rachel aſked her if ſhe would pleaſe to let her light her pipe? This was a common pretence, when ſhe could find no other way of getting into a houſe. While ſhe was filling her pipe, ſhe looked at Mrs. Jenkins and ſaid, ſhe could tell her ſome good fortune. The farmer's wife, who was a very inoffenſive, but a weak and ſuperſtitious woman, was curious to know what ſhe meant. Rachel then looked about very

carefully, and ſhutting the door with a myſterious air, aſked her if ſhe was ſure nobody would hear them. This appearance of myſtery was at once delightful and terrifying to Mrs. Jenkins, who bid the cunning woman ſpeak out. "Then," ſaid Rachel in a ſolemn whiſper, "there is to my certain knowledge a pot of money hid under one of the ſtones in your cellar." "Indeed," ſaid Mrs. Jenkins, "it is impoſſible, for now I think of it, I dreamt laſt night I was in priſon for debt." "Did you indeed?" ſaid Rachel, "that is quite ſurpriſing. Did you dream before twelve o'clock or after?" "O it was this morning, juſt before I awoke. "Then I am ſure it is true, for morning dreams always go by contraries," cried Rachel. "How lucky it was you dreamt it ſo late." "Mrs. Jenkins could hardly contain her joy, and aſked how the money was to be come at," "There is but one way," ſaid Rachel, "I muſt go into the cellar. I know by my art under which ſtone it lies, but I muſt not tell." They then both went down into the cellar, but Rachel refuſed to point at the ſtone unleſs Mrs. Jenkins would put five pieces of gold into a baſon and do as ſhe directed. The ſimple woman inſtead of turning her out of doors for a cheat, did as ſhe was bid. She put the guineas into a baſon which ſhe gave into Rachel's hand. Rachel ſtrewed ſome white powder over the gold, muttered ſome barbarous words, and pretended to perform the black art. She then told Mrs. Jenkins to put the baſon quietly down within the cellar; telling her that if ſhe offered to look into it, or even to ſpeak a word the charm would be broken. She alſo directed her to lock the cellar door, and

on no pretence to open it in leſs than forty eight hours. "If," added ſhe, "you cloſely follow theſe directions, then, by the power of my art, you you will find the baſon conveyed to the very ſtone under which the money lies hid, and a fine treaſure it will be." Mrs. Jenkins, who believed every word the woman ſaid, did exactly as ſhe was told, and Rachel took her leave with a handſome reward.

When farmer Jenkins came home he deſired his wife to draw him a cup of cider; this ſhe put off doing ſo long that he began to be diſpleaſed. At laſt ſhe begged he would drink a little beer inſtead. He inſiſted on knowing the reaſon, and when at laſt he grew angry ſhe told him all that had paſt; and owned that as the pot of gold happened to be in the cider cellar, ſhe did not dare open the door, as ſhe was ſure it would break the charm. "And it would be a pity you know," ſaid ſhe, "to loſe a good fortune for the ſake of a draught of cider." The farmer, who was not ſo eaſily impoſed upon, ſuſpected a trick. He demanded the key, and went and opened the cellar door. He found the baſon, and in it five round pieces of tin covered with powder. Mrs. Jenkins burſt out a-crying; but the farmer thought of nothing but of getting a warrant to apprehend the cunning woman. Indeed ſhe well proved her claim to that name, when ſhe inſiſted that the cellar door might be kept locked till ſhe had time to get out of the reach of all purſuit.

Poor Sally Evans! I am ſure ſhe rued the day that ever ſhe liſtened to a fortune teller! Sally was as harmleſs a girl as ever churned a pound of butter; but Sally was ignorant and ſuperſtitious. She delighted in dream-books, and had conſulted all the

cunning women in the country to tell her whether the two moles on her cheek denoted that she was to have two husbands, or only two children. If she picked up an old horse-shoe going to church she was sure that would be a lucky week. She never made a black-pudding without borrowing one of the Parson's old wigs to hang in the chimney, firmly believing there were no other means to preserve them from bursting. She would never go to-bed on Midsummer eve without sticking up in her room the well known plant called Midsummer-man, as the bending of the leaves to the right or to the left, would not fail to tell her whether Jacob, of whom we shall speak presently, was true or false. She would rather go five miles about than pass near a church-yard at night. Every seventh year she would not eat beans because they grew downward in the pod, instead of upward; and she would rather have gone with her gown open than have taken a pin of an old woman, for fear of being bewitched. Poor Sally had so many unlucky days in her calendar, that a large portion of her time became of little use, because on these days she did not dare set about any new work. And she would have refused the best offer if made to her on a Friday, which she thought so unlucky a day that she often said what a pity it was that there were any Friday in the week! Sally had twenty pounds left her by her grandmother. She had long been courted by Jacob a sober lad with whom she lived fellow servant at a creditable farmer's. Honest Jacob, like his namesake of old, thought it little to wait seven years to get this damsel to wife, because of the love he bore her, for Sally had promised to marry him when he could match her twenty pounds with another.

Now there was one Robert, a rambling, idle young gardener, who inſtead of ſitting down ſteadily in one place, uſed to roam about the country and do odd jobs where he could get them. No one underſtood any thing about him, except that he was a down-looking fellow who got his bread nobody knew how, and never had a penny in his pocket. Robert, who was now in the neighbourhood, happened to hear of Sally Evans and her twenty pounds. He conceived a longing deſire for the latter. So he went to his old friend Rachel, told her all he had heard of Sally, and promiſed if ſhe could bring about a marriage between them, ſhe ſhould go ſhares in the money.

Rachel undertook the buſineſs. She ſet off to the farm houſe and fell to ſinging one of her moſt enticing ſongs juſt under the dairy window. Sally was ſo ſtruck with the pretty tune, which was unhappily uſed to ſet off ſome very looſe words, that ſhe jumped up, dropped the ſkimming diſh into the cream and ran out to buy the ſong. While ſhe ſtooped down to rummage the baſket for theſe ſongs which had the moſt tragical pictures, for Sally had a tender heart and delighted in whatever was mournful, Rachel looked ſtedfaſtly in her face, and told her ſhe knew by her art that ſhe was born to good fortune, but adviſed her not to throw herſelf away. "Theſe two moles on your cheek," added ſhe, "ſhew you are in ſome danger." "Do they denote huſbands or children," cried Sally, ſtarting up, and letting fall the ſong of the children in the wood." "Huſbands," muttered Rachel, "Alas! poor Jacob!" ſaid Sally mournfully, "then he will die firſt won't he?" "Mum for that," quoth the fortune-teller, "I will ſay no more." Sally was impatient,

but the more curioſity ſhe diſcovered, the more myſtery Rachel affected. At laſt ſhe ſaid, "if you will croſs my hand with a piece of ſilver I will tell you your fortune. By the power of my art I can do this three ways; by cards, by the lines of your hand, or by turning a cup of tea-grounds: which will you have?" O, all! all!" cried Sally, looking up with reverence to this ſun-burnt oracle of wiſdom, who knew no leſs than three different ways of diving into the ſecrets of futurity. Alas! perſons of better ſenſe than Sally have been ſo taken in; the more is the pity! The poor girl ſaid ſhe would run up ſtairs to her little box where ſhe kept her money tied up in a bit of an old glove, and would bring down a bright queen Ann's ſix-pence very crooked. "I am ſure," added ſhe, "it is a lucky one, for it cured me of a very bad ague laſt ſpring, by only laying it nine nights under my pillow without ſpeaking a word. But then you muſt know what gave the virtue to this ſix-pence was, that it had belonged to three young men of the name of John; I am ſure I had work enough to get it. But true it is, it certainly cured me. It muſt be the ſix-pence you know, for I am ſure I did nothing elſe for my ague, except indeed taking ſome bitter ſtuff every three hours which the doctor called bark. Indeed I loſt my ague ſoon after I took it, but I am ſure it was owing to the crooked ſix-pence and not to the bark. And ſo, good woman, you may come in if you will, for there is not a ſoul in the houſe but me." This was the very thing Rachel wanted to know.

While Sally was above ſtairs untying her glove, Rachel ſlipped into the parlour, took a ſmall ſilver cup from the beaufet, and clapped it into her pocket. Sally ran down lamenting ſhe had loſt

her ſix-pence, which ſhe verily believed was owing to her having put it into a left glove, inſtead of a right one. Rachel comforted her by ſaying, that if ſhe gave her two plain ones inſtead, the charm would work juſt as well. Simple Sally thought herſelf happy to be let off ſo eaſily, never calculating that a ſmooth ſhilling was worth two crooked ſix-pences. But this ſkill was a part of the black art in which Rachel excelled. She took the money and began to examine the lines of Sally's left hand. She bit her withered lip, ſhook her head, and bade her poor dupe beware of a young man, who had black hair. "No indeed," cried Sally all in a fright, "you mean black eyes, for our Jacob has got brown hair, 'tis his eyes that are black." "That is the very thing I was going to ſay," muttered Rachel, "I meant eyes though I ſaid hair, for I know his hair is as brown as a cheſnut, and his eyes as black as a ſloe." "So they are ſure enough," cried Sally, "how in the world could you know that?" forgetting that ſhe herſelf had juſt told her ſo. And it is thus that theſe hags pick out of the credulous all which they afterwards pretend to reveal to them. "O, I know a pretty deal more than that," ſaid Rachel, but you muſt be aware of this man. "Why ſo," cried Sally with great quickneſs, "Becauſe," anſwered Rachel "you are *fated* to marry a man worth a hundred of him who has blue eyes, light hair, and a ſtoop in the ſhoulders." "No, indeed, but I can't," ſaid Sally, "I have promiſed Jacob, and Jacob I will marry." "You cannot child," returned Rachel in a ſolemn tone; "it is out of your power, you are fated to marry the grey eyes and light hair." "Nay, indeed," ſaid Sally, ſighing deeply, "if

am fated, I muſt; I know there is no reſiſting one's fate." This is a common cant with poor deluded girls, who are not aware that they themſelves make their fate by their folly, and then complain there is no reſiſting it.——"What can I do?" ſaid Sally. "I will tell you that too," ſaid Rachel. "You muſt take a walk next Sunday afternoon to the church-yard, and the firſt man you meet in a blue coat, with a large poſy of pinks and ſuthernwood in his boſom, ſitting on the church-yard wall, about ſeven o'clock, he will be the man." "Provided," ſaid Sally, much diſturbed, "that he has grey eyes, and ſtoops." "O, to be ſure," ſaid Rachel, "otherwiſe it is not the right man." "But if I ſhould miſtake," ſaid Sally, "for two men may happen to have a coat and eyes of the ſame colour?" "To prevent that," replied Rachel, "if it is the right man, the two firſt letters of his name will be R. P. This man has got money beyond ſea." "O, I do not value his money," ſaid Sally, with tears in her eyes, "for I love Jacob better than houſe or land; but if I am fated to marry another, I can't help it. You know there is no ſtruggling againſt my fate."

Poor Sally thought of nothing, and dreamt of nothing all the week but the bluecoat and the grey eyes. She made a hundred blunders at her work. She put her rennet into the butter-pan, inſtead of the cheeſe-tub. She gave the curd to the hogs, and put the whey into the vats. She put her little knife out of her pocket for fear it ſhould cut love, and would not ſtay in the kitchen, if there was not an even number of people, leſt it ſhould break the charm. She grew cold and myſterious in her behaviour to faithful Jacob, whom ſhe truly loved. But the more

ſhe thought of the fortune-teller, the more ſhe was convinced that brown hair and black eyes were not what ſhe was fated to marry, and therefore though ſhe trembled to think it, Jacob could not be the man.

On Sunday ſhe was too uneaſy to go to church; for poor Sally had never been taught that her being uneaſy was only a freſh reaſon why ſhe ought to go thither. She ſpent the whole afternoon in her little garret, dreſſing in all her beſt. Firſt ſhe put on her red ribbon, which ſhe had bought at laſt Lammas fair: then ſhe recollected that red was an unlucky colour, and changed it for a blue ribbon, tied in a true lover's knot; but ſuddenly calling to mind that poor Jacob had bought this knot for her of a pedlar at the door, and that ſhe had promiſed to wear it for his ſake, her heart ſmote her, and ſhe laid it by, ſighing to think ſhe was not fated to marry the man who had given it to her. When ſhe had looked at herſelf twenty times in the glaſs, for one vain action always brings on another, ſhe ſet off, trembling and quaking every ſtep ſhe went. She walked eagerly towards the church-yard, not daring to look to the right or left, for fear ſhe ſhould ſpy Jacob, who would have offered to walk with her. As ſoon as ſhe came within ſight of the wall, ſhe ſpied a man ſitting upon it. Her heart beat violently. She looked again; but alas! the ſtranger not only had on a black coat, but neither hair nor eyes anſwered the deſcription. She happened to caſt her eyes on the church-clock, and found ſhe was two hours before her time. This was ſome comfort. She walked away and got rid of the two hours as well as ſhe

could, paying great attention as ſhe went not to walk over any ſtraws which lay acroſs. While the clock was ſtriking ſeven, ſhe returned to the church-yard, and, O! the wonderful power of fortune-tellers! there ſhe ſaw him! there ſat the very man! his hair as light as flax, his eyes as blue as butter-milk, and his ſhoulders as round as a tub. Every tittle agreed, to the very noſegay in his waiſtcoat button-hole. At firſt indeed ſhe thought it had been ſweetbrier, and, glad to catch at a ſtraw, whiſpered to herſelf, it is not he, and I ſhall marry Jacob ſtill; but on looking again, ſhe ſaw it was ſouthernwood plain enough, and that all was over. The man accoſted her with ſome very nonſenſical, but too acceptable compliments. Sally was naturally a modeſt girl, and but for Rachel's wicked arts, would not have talked with a ſtrange man; but how could ſhe reſiſt her fate you know? After a little diſcourſe, ſhe aſked him, with a trembling heart, what might be his name? "Robert Price at your ſervice," was the anſwer. "Robert Price! that is R. P. as ſure as I am alive, and the fortune-teller was a witch! It is all out! it is all out! O the wonderful art of fortune-tellers!"

The little ſleep ſhe had that night was diſturbed with dreams of graves, and ghoſts, and funerals; but as they were morning dreams, ſhe knew thoſe always went by contraries, and that a funeral denoted a wedding. Still a ſigh would now and then heave, to think that in that wedding Jacob could have no part. Such of my readers as know the power which ſuperſtition has over the weak and credulous mind, ſcarcely need be told, that poor Sally's unhappineſs was ſoon compleated. She forgot all her vows to Jacob; ſhe at once forſook an honeſt

man whom she loved, and consented to marry one of whom she knew nothing, from a ridiculous notion that she was compelled to do so by a decree which she had it not in her power to resist. She married this Richard Price, the strange gardener, whom she soon found to be very worthless, and very much in debt. He had no such thing as "money beyond sea," as the fortune-teller had told her; but he had another wife there. He got immediate possession of Sally's 20*l.* Rachel put in for her share, but he refused to give her a farthing, and bid her get away or he would have her taken up on the vagrant act. He soon ran away from Sally, leaving her to bewail her own weakness; for it was that indeed, and not any irresistible, fate which had been the cause of her ruin. To compleat her misery, she herself was suspected of having stolen the silver cup which Rachel had pocketed. Her master, however, would not prosecute her, as she was falling into a deep decline, and she died in a few months of a broken heart.

Rachel, whenever she got near home, used to drop her trade of fortune-teller, and only dealt in the wares of her basket. Mr. Wilson, the clergyman, found her one day dealing out some very wicked ballads to some children. He went up with a view to give her a reprimand; but had no sooner begun his exhortation than up came a constable, followed by several people. "There she is, that is she, that is the old witch who tricked my wife out of the five guineas," said one of them. "Do you, office constable, seize that old hag. She may tell fortunes and find pots of gold in Taunton gaol, for there she will have nothing else to do?" This was that very farmer Jenkins, whose wife had

been cheated by Rachel of the five guineas. He had taken pains to trace her to her own parish; he did not ſo much value the loſs of the money, but he thought it was a duty he owed the public to clear the country of ſuch vermin. Mr. Wilſon immediately committed her. She took her trial at the next aſſizes, when ſhe was ſentenced to a year's impriſonment. In the mean time the pawnbroker to whom ſhe had ſold the cup, which ſhe had ſtolen from poor Sally's maſter, impeached; and as the robbery was fully proved upon Rachel, ſhe was ſentenced for this crime to Botany Bay; and a happy day it was for the county of Somerſet, when ſuch a nuiſance was ſent out of it. She was tranſported much about the ſame time that her huſband Giles loſt his life in ſtealing the net from the garden wall.

I have thought it my duty to print this little hiſtory as a kind warning to all you young men and maidens not to have any thing to ſay TO CHEATS, IMPOSTORS, CUNNING WOMEN, FORTUNE-TELLERS, CONJURERS, and INTERPRETERS OF DREAMS.—Liſten to me, your true friend, when I aſſure you that God never reveals to weak and wicked women thoſe ſecret deſigns of his Providence, which no human wiſdom is able to foreſee. To conſult theſe falſe oracles is not only fooliſh, but ſinful. It is fooliſh, becauſe they are themſelves as ignorant as thoſe whom they pretend to teach, and it is ſinful, becauſe it is prying into that futurity which God, as kindly as wiſely, hides from men. God indeed *orders* all things; but when you have a mind to do a fooliſh thing, do not fancy you are *fated* to do it. This is tempting Providence, and not truſting him. It is indeed, "charging God with folly." Prudence is his gift,

and you obey him better when you make uſe of prudence under the direction of prayer, then when you madly run into ruin, and think you are only ſubmitting to your fate. Never fancy that you are compelled to undo yourſelf. Never believe that God conceals his will from a ſober Chriſtian who obeys his laws, and reveals it to a vagabond Gipſey, who runs up and down breaking the laws, both of God and man. King Saul never conſulted the witch till he had left off ſerving God. The Bible will direct us what to do better then any conjurer, and no days are unlucky but thoſe which we make ſo by our own vanity, folly, and ſin.

Z.